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THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 2014

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IMPORT NEWS

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■ **SHOWCASE:** Port Colborne high school students to display environmentally-friendly work

Green art in limelight

MARIYANNE FIRTH
QMI Agency Niagara

Pop can tabs, broken crayons and old school notes have been transformed into works of art that will soon be on display to the community.

The fifth annual Green Art Show, presented by Community Artists Niagara, takes place April 26-27 from noon to 4 p.m. at The Wilson Archives, 296 King St. in Port Colborne.

The showcase features art created with an environmental message by students at Lakeshore Catholic and Port Colborne high schools.

Students were challenged to explore what being green means to them and to express that notion in an

environmentally-friendly way, whether using recycled and repurposed materials or using the environment as the subject of their piece.

Grade 11 Lakeshore student Claudia Wood took hundreds of pages of school notes, destined for the recycling bin, and made herself a tutu complete with paper rose accents.

The dancer, who also has a passion for the environment, was excited to share her work with the public for the first time.

Wood credited the show's organizers for hosting the event and thrusting student artwork into the spotlight.

"This is a chance for students to be showcase as real artists," said Lakeshore art

teacher Vanessa Iannantuono. Many were eager, she added, to share their passion for the environment with the community.

Visitors to the show will have the opportunity to vote for their favourite pieces in a variety of categories. Prizes for the winners, announced April 27, have been donated by Port Colborne businesses.

mariyanne.firth@sunmedia.ca
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MARIYANNE FIRTH/STAFF PHOTO
Lakeshore Catholic High School student Dominic Magazzeni created a bird statue out of scrap metal for the fifth annual Green Art Show, hosted by Community Artists Niagara.



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UPFRONT

■ **MEDICINAL MARIJUANA:** 'Give us an out and we'll jump all over it, but there isn't

Port passes pot bylaw

MARYANNE FIRTH
Import News Staff

It was with a "sense of defeat in their voices" that Port Colborne councillors passed a bylaw Monday night concerning commercial medical marijuana facilities in their city.

As councillors each stood to share their thoughts on the growing industry in the lakeside city, there was no triumph in their words, only recognition of the reality of the situation, Mayor Vance Badawey said.

"You hear both sides, try to be fair, try to strike a balance" between concerned residents and new business, he said, but that's made difficult when an issue is "dumped" in the lap of municipalities that are given little to no control by the federal government.

New legislation, which came into effect April 1, regulates larger production, processing and distribution of medical marijuana. Commercial licences are issued by Health Canada.

While the grow operations must abide by municipal bylaws, they are federally regulated.

To provide Port Colborne some say in where the facilities are erected, the agricultural zoning bylaw amendment passed Monday was created. It requires a 150-metre setback for medical marijuana facilities from sensitive land uses, such as residences, and has provided council with site plan control to oversee factors such as parking, screening to reduce visibility of the facility, fencing and lighting on the property.



FILE PHOTO

Port Colborne is looking to amend its zoning bylaw, site plan control bylaw and official plan in wake of changes to federal regulations overseeing commercial medical marijuana facilities.

While a step in the right direction, the bylaw does not provide the control the city would like to have over such facilities, Badawey said.

Under advisement from legal counsel, the city cannot prohibit the grow-ops from setting up in Port Colborne, said Dan Aquilina, the city's director of planning and development.

Some municipalities have chosen to prohibit the industry, but if challenged at the Ontario Municipal Board it would likely be a losing battle, he said.

Knowing taxpayers would ultimately foot the bill for what has been suggested as an inevitable loss is not a responsible move, Badawey added. "But, this isn't over," he told a packed gallery of residents who came to share concerns about an existing legal grow operation on Pinecrest Rd.

"I think it's incumbent upon this council to take on a role of leadership and send a message to the federal government: 'Come on guys, enough is enough.'"

Badawey urged Health Canada to put a stay on all licenc-

ing until studies can be completed on the implications of locating these facilities near sensitive land uses.

My view on medical marijuana is it's a big bunch of BS, Ward 1 Coun. Bill Steele told the crowd.

"I don't think this business is good for Port Colborne. I could sit here and say 'No, I'm against this. Let's throw it out of the city of Port Colborne' ... but it's reality," he said.

"Let's close the door somewhat, because we know we can't close it totally."

Steele is awaiting proposed

official plan changes coming to council in the near future that will help drive marijuana developments toward industrial areas.

Badawey said residents have made it clear that these types of facilities belong in industrial zones — not on agricultural land surrounded by homes.

"I'd urge the proponent to consider that, with incentive from the municipality," Badaway said of the Placrest property, for which a commercial licence has been applied for by Muilehoom.

The greenhouses, used now for personal legal pot growth, are able to continue operations in the meantime due to a federal court injunction put in place that allows individuals users to continue growing their own plants.

Ward 4 Coun. Barbara Butters admitted the bylaw is "not a perfect solution," but "this seems to be our only way to protect the residents who live out there."

Council, she said, is "relying on the proponent" to adhere to comments made publicly about wanting to be a good neighbour and part of the community.

"I hope that was being said in a sincere way," she said.

*I wish there was something more carved in stone.

Residents have previously shared worries of increased crime in the neighbourhood, decreased property values and an impact on quality of life due to odours from the Pinecrest facility.

Mulleboom Organics president Marc Kealey said the company is prepared to create a liaison committee to help address and mitigate resident concerns.

The committee could be established immediately, tours of the facility arranged and plans for the future shared, he said.

Ward 4 Coun. Ron Bodner assured Kealey that councilors are "going to hold your feet to the fire" to ensure those words are adhered to.

Twitter: @mirthTribune

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LOCAL NEWS

■ **MUNICIPAL ELECTION:** Former MP first to register as candidate in Port Colborne

Maloney running for mayor

ALLAN BONNER
Inport News Staff

After six years on the sidelines, former Welland MP John Maloney hopes to make a comeback.

But this time, he's hoping for the job of Port Colborne's mayor.

Maloney, 69, served the community for 15 years as a Liberal MP until losing in the 2008 federal election to current MP Malcolm Allen. He was again defeated in 2011.

"Retirement isn't all it's geared up to be," Maloney said when reached at his Port Colborne home, Friday afternoon.

"Certainly I missed the public life and I feel I still have

many more years to give to my community and I hope to do so."

**JOHN MALONEY**

have to wait until city hall opens Tuesday to file his nomination papers.

He said a lot of people in the community asking him to consider running for mayor during the past few years.

"It got the point that where

no matter where I went people were asking me, 'he'd said."

The Port Colborne lawyer and lifelong resident said his campaign will focus on reducing municipal debt, addressing the declining industries, and investing in core infrastructure renewal. He said those issues were on the minds of the people who urged him to return to politics.

"We have a great community and we have much to offer, and we hope we can think that around," he said. "It's something you have to work at and certainly that will be one of my main objectives."

He also hopes to work with politicians in neighbouring

communities to address those issues.

"Instead of fighting with these mayors like we've seen in the past, we have to be working together," he said.

"What may be good for Port Colborne might also be good for Welland and Wainfleet. It's not one individual mayor out fighting the world so to speak. We all have to work together."

"United I think we can start achieving things."

Maloney also plans to work more closely with neighbouring communities to preserve south Niagara hospital services, particularly at the Welland hospital.

"The way the Niagara Health System is going, Welland is now our hospital

and the services we had in this community are not coming back," he said.

"We have to fight to keep Welland. ... I don't want to be driving to Niagara Falls or St. Catharines" for medical care.

In a prepared statement, Maloney said the city needs "a fresh start at city hall."

"We need new leadership from a proven community activist and servant of the public," he added. "My pledge to the citizens of Port Colborne is simple: I will be honest, I will lead our city with integrity and I will always put community first."

Maloney is the first candidate to announce plans to run for a position on Port Colborne city council.

The only other candidates registered in the municipal election in Port Colborne are Niagara Catholic District School Board trustee candidate Dino Scoll, and French language public school board trustee candidate Derrick Fournier.

Current Mayor Vance Badaway said he has yet to decide if he will run for reelection, adding "my announcement will be pending."

Asked his thoughts about Maloney's intention to run for his job, Badaway replied: "I think John's record speaks for itself."

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■ **BUILDING THE WELLAND CANAL:** Mike Johnson uses his computer to track down names of men who died during construction

Clue hunter adds to memorial

GRANT LAFLECHE
QMI Agency Niagara

It's not sexy work. It requires a patient, quiet energy, a sharp eye and lots of time. It is done in near total silence.

What Mike Johnson's efforts lack in drama, they more than make up for in importance. He has spent more than 500 hours staring at a glowing microfilm screen at the St. Catharines Centennial Library, sifting through decades worth of newspapers, searching for names, dates and identities.

The politicians, labour leaders and historians may debate the form and style of the upcoming memorial to the workers who died building the Welland Canal, but it is Johnson who has been finding the names of men who died building the waterway.

This is the real work of history," says St. Catharines Museum curator Kathleen Powell.

"Digging through documents, finding the things that have been missed, Mike's contribution to the project has

been immense."

Most days of the last year, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Johnson has spent digging through every copy of the St. Catharines Standard, the St. Catharines Evening Journal and the Thorold Post that were published from 1914 to 1932, the years the canal was under construction.

He searched news stories, community notices and obituaries looking for information on the canal construction deaths.

Prior to his involvement on the project, local historians pegged the number of killed workers at 126.

Johnson's work has brought that number to 131.

"I've gotten so much out of this project," says Johnson, a 78-year-old retired paper mill worker and amateur historian. "I've always been interested in history. I got my history degree at night while I was working full time."

Arden Phair, former curator of the museum and the key historian on the canal memorial project, says when

it became clear municipal officials were intent on building a memorial to the workers, some old fashioned history gumshoe work would be needed.

"At the time, the number was at 124 but there was always a concern that we didn't have them all," Phair says. "That is, I suppose, always a concern, that someone may have been missed. But we wanted to be as sure as we could be."

The single best place to start looking for missing names was copies of the local press, Phair says.

"The Standard in particular didn't miss anything," Johnson says. "Anything that was going on in the community, you could find in the paper."

Johnson was a frequent volunteer at the museum and adapt and searching through historical records. "My thought was to bring in Mike and ask him to search part of the newspaper record, because that really is a mammoth undertaking," Phair

says. "I thought we could get a bunch of people to do it, but he volunteered to take on the entire thing."

From a chair on the second floor of the library, Johnson has shed new light on who died and why while the canal was being built.

"The thing is, most of those deaths were preventable," he says.

"You have guys crushed by rocks or logs, hit by trains. One guy was electrocuted. There was no thought of safety. The wires were just right there, exposed."

"The work isn't easy. There was a negligent racism at play that coloured the official records and news coverage of the period. Many of the workers were immigrants and not treated with the same respect as natural-born Canadians."

"So someone would die on the job, but he would just be listed in the newspapers as 'the Romanian,'" Johnson says. "Then you look up the information on the inquest and you find they have three

**Mike Johnson**

SUBMITTED PHOTO

or four ways of spelling his name. They didn't really care. That would never happen today."

Johnson is nothing if not a patient man, and his methodical searching through nearly two decades of news coverage uncovered the names of several men who died building the canal that do not appear in official government

records.

It also helped clarify the spelling of names and causes of death of many of the workers.

Phair and Powell say without Johnson's work, those men might have forever remained forgotten.

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IMPORT NEWS

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■ ourview

Why Canadian cities are called 'resilient'

Three Canadian cities have been ranked as the most resilient in the world.

Private real estate group Grosvenor has come out with a "most resilient cities" list — ranking 50 cities around the world. Niagara isn't on the list, but that's to be expected. We'd probably be on the top 200...

New York City is placed at 14th, London is further down at 18th, Cairo, Jakarta and Dhaka are last.

The top three are Canadian: Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary.

But what exactly does the report mean by resilience? Last week an engineer released a blog post on which Canadians cities are most likely to survive the zombie apocalypse. Toronto was second last. St. John's, Regina and Edmonton took the top three spots. Basically, you want to be near a Canadian Forces base and have a lot of guns around — and be in shape. Again, Niagara didn't make the list.

The more reality-grounded Grosvenor report explains that "vulnerability is a city's exposure to shocks in terms of both magnitude and frequency. Shocks may be due to changes in the climate, environmental degradation, shortage of resources, failed infrastructure or community strife due to inequality... So resilience increases when cities have more adaptive capacity and decreases when they are less vulnerable."

As far as nothing to do with zombies or Rob Ford's re-election prospects.

In the Vancouver case study, the report notes the city's "favourable country credit rating and good access to financial services within the city." Their only complaint about Vancouver is "its low-lying coastal location makes it relatively vulnerable to sea level rise."

As far as amount of this compilation is actually based on worries over regional changes due to climate change. But despite the fear mongering we hear from some pockets of the country — our environmental factors, infrastructure and community cohesion — it's clear ours fare better than many other cities.

Why does a report by a private real estate firm matter? Because investors aren't politically correct. Money knows no borders. It's important to hear them out for this reason. It's integral to maintain high rankings on lists like this.

Compared to the cities that place last, it's clear what Canadian cities have going for them: stability.

Let's keep it that way.

What Easter is about

PASTOR SAN JEEVA

Three people are greeted at the Feast of Passover by St. Peter who tells them they can enter upon answering the question: "What is Easter?"

Candidate 1! replies: "That's when we cook a turkey and give thanks." Peter frowns.

The next one says: "It's when Jesus came to earth as a baby, with angels, shepherds and the Wise Guys."

Peter is disgusted by this display of ignorance until #3 pipes up: "Easter is when Jesus was crucified for our sins and lay buried in a tomb for three days."

His face lights up as our candidate continues: "Then he rises from the dead, and he sees his shadow, it means we have six more weeks of winter!"

That's when St. Peter faints! Actually this joke may not be all that far-fetched.

Several years ago, British supermarket chain Somerfield issued a press release which read: "Brits will on average be enjoying 3.5 (chocolate) eggs each over the Easter weekend alone. But over a quarter don't know why handling them even symbolizes the birth of Jesus."

Shortly thereafter, an apology accompanied a revised version which described Easter as the "re-birth of Jesus."

Shocked that the amendment did not

actually make amends, Somerfield's public relations firm contacted the Church of England.

Here's a church official's (under) statement: "I clarified with them that it would probably be best to refer to Easter as a celebration of Christ's resurrection rather than his birth."

Hence the third press release which finally wiped the (Easter) egg off Somerfield's corporate face.

In the early years of ordained ministry, I used to quiz young children in church about the meaning of Easter. It wasn't until I was told to learn that the Easter Bunny and egg hunts dominated the responses.

Now you know why such quizzing is not part of my Easter repertoire any more.

How about adults?

According to a recent survey by the Barna Group, 42% of Americans said that the meaning of Easter was the resurrection of Jesus. 2% said that Easter is about the "birth of Christ" while another 2% indicated it was about the "rebirth of Jesus" (hello, Somerfield!)

Some simply celebrate Easter as a festival of life, replete with symbols such as baby chicks, lilies and butterflies, with no reference to the bodily resurrection of Jesus whatsoever. Others claim that He lives, but only in the memory of His followers.

The Biblical record, though, is very

clear about what Easter is.

On the third day after Jesus died and was buried, some women went to anoint his body with spices, as was their custom. When they got to the tomb, they found that the stone that sealed the entrance had been rolled away and the tomb was empty. Angels' beings told them: "He is not here. He has been raised!"

Shortly thereafter, the Risen Jesus made personal appearances to Mary, some women and then to his disciples over a period of 40 days.

He showed them his nail-pierced hands and wounded side (where spear had been thrust on Friday) and invited Thomas to touch him (John 20:27). In Matthew 28:9 we are told that they clasped his feet.

According to Luke 24:42, he ate a piece of broiled fish and honey. Clearly he was not just a Casper of a Christ, a disembodied spirit being, but a full-blooded human with a fully functioning digestive system.

To quote John Updike in *Seven Stanzas at Easter*:

"Make no mistake: if He rose at all it was as His body;

If the cells' dissolution did not

reverse, the molecules rekit, the amino acids rekindle, the Church will fall."

That, beloved reader, is what Easter is about.

■ readers'views

TIME FOR THREE-YEAR COLLEGE DEGREES

As Ontario strives to address its unemployment problem, it is more important than ever to produce post-secondary graduates with career-focused qualifications. The province needs more college graduates. A key step Ontario must take is to allow the public colleges to start offering three-year degree programs. Currently, Ontario's colleges can award degrees to graduates of four-year programs, but must award diplomas to graduates of three-year programs. This needs to change. In most OECD countries, graduates of three-year post-secondary programs — including graduates of career-focused programs — earn degrees. It's time to elevate Ontario to international levels and adopt the same standard here. The need for such reforms is clear. Growing numbers of employers seek people with degree credentials who have the advanced skills and qualifications to succeed in the new economy. Many parents and students also have a strong preference for degree programs, including degrees in applied areas of study. There's nothing radical about this idea. As far back as 1972, an Ontario commission on post-secondary education recommended that colleges

that wish to offer three-year degree programs should be allowed to do so. Furthermore, the government knows that colleges can deliver high-quality degree programs. Allowing colleges to offer a broader range of degree programs will help emphasize career-specific post-secondary education at a time when Ontario needs more highly qualified graduates. Too many young people are unemployed or underemployed. Part of the reason is that there is a skills mismatch between the skills and credentials held by people seeking work and the qualifications sought by employers. While there is debate about the size of the skills mismatch, there is recognition that employers in many sectors can't find qualified people, even as the unemployment rate remains quite high. The skills gap challenge is expected to get worse as new technologies and innovations continue to transform the economy and create even greater demands for highly qualified people. The Ontario government needs to approve the introduction of three-year degree programs at colleges, and expand the opportunities for students to pursue four-year degrees.

DAN PATTERSON, PRESIDENT
NIAGARA COLLEGE

KUDOS TO THE HEALTH SYSTEM

Recently I dialled 911 for help and before I put the phone down, three paramedics walked through the door and worked on my husband. He improved to the point where we felt he was OK to stay at home. However, the next morning, I had to call 911 again and the truck and ambulance arrived with a total of five paramedics. He was assessed and transferred to GNGH, where he spent most of the week in critical condition in the ICU. From my first 911 call, my husband received the best treatment and I feel blessed we have such knowledgeable, caring professionals available in emergencies. The work must be hard, relentless and heart-breaking, especially when dealing with acute situations. I know the service sometimes breaks down, but in our case, my husband has received exceptional care and I have nothing but praise for the paramedics, doctors and nursing staff involved in his treatment. He is now on the way to recovery and may be home soon, far which we are both very thankful.

ROSE SMITH
NIAGARA FALLS

Continued on next page

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For further information, contact Dave Johnson.

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LOCAL NEWS

■ **FUEL:** Costs skyrocket at Niagara pumps

Gas prices another roadblock for drivers

DON FRASER
QMI Agency Niagara

For Brad Baker, who depends on floral deliveries, the steadily rising price of gas stinks.

"We'll deliver through the entire Niagara region," said Baker, owner of 888blooms in downtown St. Catharines. "When we're doing multiple deliveries, it definitely affects that pricing."

"I have very slowly increased those prices due to the gas with-out bumping it up tremendously," he said. "It definitely has an effect on us."

Baker said the public also understands the burden high gas prices place on deliveries. "They're definitely not getting their gas for free, so we wouldn't be getting ours for free either."

According to Tomorrow's GasPriceToday.com, gas prices in St. Catharines averages about \$1.362 cents/litre Friday. That's about 14 cents per litre higher than three months ago and 14 cents higher than one year ago. Prices across Niagara generally

fell within a three-cent range of Friday's average.

At OntarioGasPrices.com, regular gas prices for 34 stations in the Garden City Friday ranged from a low of \$1.347 per litre at a 7-Eleven on Hartzel Rd. to a number of stations selling the fuel at \$1.378.

These skyward prices at the pump have also caused financial pain for many motorists like Maci McNeil.

"I think it's crazy," said the 18-year-old south St. Catharines student and Ford Escape driver.

"People are still making the same amount of money and few people these days are getting raises, but the price just keep going up."

McNeil said the cost of fuel is making her reevaluate pleasure trips behind the wheel.

"It may be that I'm not driving to Port Dalhousie for a nice walk, because I want to save on gas," she said.

Energy analyst Dan McTeague of Tomorrow's GasPriceToday.com said in the Niagara



JULIE JOCSAR/QMI AGENCY

Gas prices have shot up to 139.9 in Smithville and are hovering around 137-138 in St. Catharines. Gas is posted at 137.9 at the Petro-Canada station on Glenridge Ave.

market, price spikes will often lag behind the Toronto market when wholesale prices rise.

He attributes that, in part, to a moderating effect caused by a greater dependence on independent retailers here.

In that way, there can be a "false sense of security where prices remained low until they sprang up the night before last to \$1.38," McTeague said Thurs-

day.

He said a recent overall wholesale gas price rise can be partly attributed to "aggressive speculation by hedgers that the U.S. economy is back on its feet, job applications are being filled."

A weak Canadian dollar, and a transition period when refiners shed cheaper winter gas for summer gas "which costs just a

little more to produce" are also combining to push wholesale prices up, McTeague said.

He predicts prices will stay where they are for the next few days, then "possibly trickle down" in the short and medium term.

don.fraser@summedia.ca
Twitter @don_standard

■ **readers' views**

From Previous page

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LOCAL NEWS

Let's Talk Transit

Residents pay exorbitant fees to get medical records

Late in 2013, several Ontario MPPs spoke about the need to pass a regulation to protect Ontario residents from having to pay exorbitant fees to access their own medical records.

Yet here we are in April 2014 and the problem hasn't been fixed.

Worse, the Ontario Liberal government has known about this problem since at least 2006, when a regulation limiting fees was proposed but never proclaimed as law.

In 2008, Ontario's information and privacy commissioner, Ann Cavoukian, publicly asked the government to regulate fees patients were charged to obtain copies of their health records.

In 2010, Liberal MPP David Caplan, a former Ontario health minister, put forward a private member's bill on this issue.

But apparently our provincial government is too busy to deal with such a small problem.

After all, who really cares what we have to pay to obtain a copy of our own medical files?

Well, just wait until one of your doctors retires and you have to pay \$200 to

have your file retrieved.

Or wait until you need some records for a personal injury case and have to pay \$120 for nine pages of notes, or \$350 for six pages.

How about \$500 for a five-page print-out of notes, or \$100 for a three-page page summary of prescriptions from your pharmacist?

These just a few of the examples provided by Liberal MPP Bob Delaney at Queen's Park in late 2013 when he demonstrated the need for a regulatory remedy.

The numbers are all over the place because there's no law governing what custodians of medical information can charge.

Many take advantage of this regulatory gap to gouge patients or customers. Usually, the medical records are sought by a lawyer for purposes of a lawsuit.

Lawyers don't care about the amounts charged because it's their clients who have to pay for these out-of-pocket disbursements.

See RECORDS on Page 7

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LOCAL NEWS

RECORDS

Residents still paying to access own records

From Page 6

Often, these amounts are reimbursed by an insurance company as part of a settlement. But not always.

Medical records may be required to process a disability claim, to apply under the Ontario Disability Support Program, or to apply for social assistance under Ontario Works.

Often people with disabilities have lengthy medical records, resulting in large fees.

Not all medical professionals overcharge their patients, nor does every pharmacist, but there's no excuse for this regulatory gap.

Some professionals will reduce their fee if asked by their patients, but why should anybody be put in that position?

Many hospitals charge reasonable fees.

Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre has an electronic records system and allows patients to access and print many records online, without a fee.

This issue doesn't apply to situations where professionals are asked to prepare reports or provide a summary of records.

Professionals are entitled to be fairly compensated for these tasks, although too many charge excessive amounts for them, thinking an insurance company

will pick up the tab.

Personal injury lawyer Roger Foisy has long advocated for government regulation, pointing out an Ontario Medical Association recommendation that physicians charge \$30 for the first 20 pages and 25 cents for additional pages is not normally followed.

He also points out the OMA recommendation doesn't apply to clinics that employ chiropractors or physiotherapists.

According to Folsy, the excessive fees impact clients' net settlement values and increase costs for insurance companies thereby contributing to higher premiums.

While the Ontario government is otherwise occupied and apparently unable to proclaim a simple regulation — after all there must be so many stakeholders who have yet to be consulted — there is something you can do if faced with an exorbitant bill for your medical records.

First, ask to have the fee reduced. If you don't want to do that or it doesn't work, you can file a complaint with Ontario's (or your own province's) Information and Privacy Commission.

If they believe the fee is too high they can intercede and have the fee reduced.



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■ **NPCA:** Conservation authority issues Bruce Trail advisory

Hikers urged to stay on designated trails

MELISSA MANGELSEN
 PelhamNews Staff

Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority has issued an advisory urging safety when visiting conservation areas.

The advisory was issued after two Niagara teenagers were treated for serious injuries on the weekend after they fell down a sheer cliff while hiking at Beamer Memo-

rial Conservation Area in Grimsby.

The teens were walking along the Bruce Trail when they strayed from the marked path onto a ledge that gave way, sending them 20 metres to the rocks below.

NPCA spokesman Michael Reles said the advisory was issued to caution hikers to stay on designated trails for personal safety and to pro-

tect environmentally-sensitive areas, to be mindful of warnings posted on signs and to wear proper footwear and clothing.

"We want people to be able to enjoy our conservation areas without having to put a lot of restrictions on them," said Reles. "The trails are in place so people have a safe place to hike without injury." NPCA has not issued an

advisory regarding waterways, but Reles said people should also use caution near water.

"Because of the melt and the rain, the banks along streams and rivers could slide. We encourage people to stay away from quick-moving waterways and stay off of the lands around them," he said.

melissa.mangelser@sunmedia.ca
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IN BRIEF

Brock hosts Congress

Brock University is

expecting 8,000 scholars in May for Canada's largest interdisciplinary academic gathering.

Congress 2014 is organized by the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, and brings various academics, researchers, policy-makers and practitioners

This version takes place May 24 to 30 and is titled Borders Without Boundaries.

It brings 70 learned societies and associations to the university, and draws delegates from across Canada and around the world.

A Brock release says the event could generate about \$10 million in spinoff revenues for local host communities.

As part of the event, the university has organized Congress Plus to showcase scholarly and creative arts research.

Congress Plus will include nearly 30 events like theatre productions, concerts and lectures open to attendees, academics and the community. Brock last hosted Congress in 1996.

For more info about volunteering at Congress 2014, contact Curtis Gadula, manager of Student Life and Community Experience at cgadula@brocku.ca
 For further details, visit www.brocku.ca/congress2014



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LOCAL NEWS

IN BRIEF

Walleye tournament returning

Port Colborne is looking to reel in sponsorship for the 22nd annual 444 International Walleye Tournament.

The tournament, held in conjunction with the second annual Budweiser Can-Am Fishing Derby, is hosted by Port Colborne and District Conservation Club June 20-22.

City council Monday night agreed to pay \$4,875 toward sponsorship and offer a 35% reduced group docking rate for the event.

Council approved \$3,500 for the tournament in 2013, but the funds were never used as the event took a one-year hiatus.

The city's sponsorship co-ordinator will work with tournament organizers to try and find sponsorship for the event, both this year and in the long term.

Hikers be warned

Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority has issued an advisory urging safety when visiting conservation areas.

The advisory was issued after two Niagara teenagers were treated for serious injuries on the weekend after they fell down a cliff hiking at Beesmer Memorial Conservation Area in Grimsby.

The teens were walking along the Bruce Trail when they strayed from the marked path onto a ledge that gave

way, sending them 20 metres to rocks below.

NPCA spokesman Michael Reles said the advisory was issued to caution hikers to stay on designated trails for personal safety and to protect environmentally-sensitive areas, to be mindful of warnings posted on signs and to wear proper footwear and clothing.

NPCA has not issued an advisory regarding waterways, but Reles said people should also use caution near water.

"Because of the melt and the rain, the banks along streams and rivers could slide. We encourage people to stay away from quick-moving waterways and stay off of the lands around them," he said.

Port meeting for Ward 2

Port Colborne Councillors Wron Doucet and Angie Desmarais will host a Ward 2 meeting on May 8.

The meeting, open to residents from across the lakeside city, will take place at Tim Hortons on Hwy. 3 beginning at 7 p.m.

Animal control contract renewed for Port Colborne

Port Colborne has renewed its animal control and shelter services contract with Welland and District Humane Society.

Following a request for proposal, for which three bids were received, city staff recommended the Welland shelter receive the contract.

Council approved the two-year agreement Monday at a cost of \$321,439.

The Welland humane society has been overseeing animal control in the lakeside city since 2001.

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Ramping up foraging etiquette

It's around this time of year that my Instagram feed starts filling with them.

Photos of chefs and foodies flashing cheek-aching grins as they hoist huge bouquets of wild leeks, known as ramps, clog my photo-sharing app. I cringe at each one as my thumbs whirl and twirl comments like "Try garlic mustard instead. It's delicious and invasive so you can take as much as you want."

Ramps are a delicacy with their mild onion flavour, and one of the most easily identifiable wild foods growing in Niagara's forests. That makes them the gateway plant for newbie foragers.

But those trails also make ramps one of the most over-harvested wild foods in this age of hyper-localism.

The hefty price tags they can comfortably wear on menus and at farmers markets don't help their cause, either, as greed overrules the ethics of some foragers.

When I first started foraging five years

ago, I felt like I won the lottery when I found a massive clump of ramps on the outskirts of a local park. I harvested four from hundreds, unearthing the entire plant with my fleshy white root bulbs the size of my thumbs. I got them home only to discover my harvest was the equivalent of an old growth forest because of how long it took my leeks to grow to the size they were. These days, I stick to noting that garlic mustard is interesting and telling people to go easy on the ramp.

Still, my killjoy comments on Instagram only net more photos of happy foragers throwing conservation to the wind for the novelty of "testing off the grid" and finding their next meal in the great outdoors rather than the grocery store. But the ramp's precarious fate throughout North America has been written about frequently in the past few years in the *New York Times*, the *Globe and Mail*, and other news sites and food blogs.

For people interested in learning how to sustainably forage wild foods growing in our midst, Brock University is holding workshops on April 25 and May 31. The sessions, called Foraging the Escarpment, will be led by Cassie Wever, whose background in biological sciences, working in native plant nurseries and as a hobby seed collector piqued her interest in foraging years ago. Ethical harvesting will be a key lesson in Wever's workshop.

That means ramps will be left alone during the sessions. "Natural resources and ecosystems don't just exist for us to harvest from them," Wever said in an e-mail. "And we should understand when we're picking anything, even when we're just enjoying a walk in the woods, that we're only a small piece in a much larger ecosystem."

The sessions, offered through Brock's Continuing Education

department, are geared toward foragers of all levels of experience. Wever will cover plant identification with time spent on campus seeking out easily identifiable wild foods she hopes to use in a dish that participants can take home with them. It's hands-on learning that, thanks to Wever's knowledge, is safer for foragers — and the ecosystem — than searching for their next meal alone in the wilds of Niagara.

"You can spend as much time learning about something like this from books, but the best way to learn is to get outside and use your guide, touch plants, smell them, and try and figure out what they are," Wever said.

Given how disconnected many people are from the natural world around them, Wever is hopeful that not only will participants be able to tell the difference between burdock and chicory, they'll view Niagara in a new way and share

their knowledge so others can do the same.

"There is a certain amount of wonder and enchantment that comes from beginning to see the place where we live like this, and it also builds a huge amount of respect and understanding," she said. "There's a whole grocery store and a pharmacy, and a hardware store, all in our backyards."

"My ideal is that someone will leave with a better understanding and some skills around foraging, respect for how to do it ethically, and will be able to share what they have learned on their next walk in the woods with family or children."

Tiffany Mayer writes about local food and farming at eatingniagara.com. Her first book, *Niagara Food: A Flavourful History of the Peninsula's Bounty (The History Press)*, will be published later this year. You can reach her at eatingniagara@gmail.com.



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NIAGARA FALLS

REVIEW

■ **AGRICULTURE:** Vineland Research and Innovation Centre breeding new Ontario greenhouse tomatoes

The quest for tastier tomatoes

ROB HOULE

QMI Agency Niagara

David Liscombe is on a five-year mission to boldly go where no tomato scientist has gone before.

The researcher at Vineland Research Centre is tasked with creating better-tasting Ontario greenhouse tomatoes.

"We're really trying to move forward and improve the flavour of the tomatoes..." Liscombe said.

"It's a competitive industry and OGVV (the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers) has identified product improvement as a way to stay ahead of the curve. Certainly, you can have great

products, but you always want to be improving upon those and providing products that differentiate Ontario produce and what's available elsewhere.

"So really, that's what it's all about."

While Liscombe will create the hybrids, he will be guided by the information planned by Amy Bowen, the centre's consumer insights program leader.

"In the past, breeders have really lacked the tools to be able to evaluate flavour," Liscombe said. "So in the breeding programs, there tend to be traits like yield and firmness, uniformity, disease resistance, that were really the focus of the program.

Because there was no good way to objectively evaluate flavour, it was difficult to keep track of that."

It's up to Bowen to tell Liscombe what consumers want from an on-the-vine greenhouse tomato.

She oversees sensory panels that gauge "what it is consumers are looking for and what it is they would categorize as flavourful tomatoes," Bowen said.

"So we've got a trained sensory panel here, and they will be profiling these different tomatoes to be able to differentiate them based on taste, aromas, flavours and even textures of the tomatoes, so we will be able to see

which tomatoes are more similar and more different from each other in terms of their sensory properties.

"And the second piece is then to take those tomatoes to the consumers and ask them how they like or dislike them."

Most tomatoes in Ontario greenhouses today are grown from seeds developed in other countries, and are bred according to the growing conditions of foreign regions, Bowen said.

"The goal of this project is to improve on the flavour of greenhouse tomatoes that already exist and to make them compatible and improve them for our industry," she said.

"Currently, most of the genetics of Ontario-grown tomatoes weren't produced in Canada," Bowen said. "They were produced under very different growing conditions and climatic conditions, even within the greenhouse, because they have different heat levels, humidity, temperature fluctuations.

"Since we know that the growing environment definitely impacts the flavour, then therefore we need to be optimizing the flavour under our growing conditions."

Bowen said the first of the program's tomatoes will be judged by members of the sensory panels in late summer and early fall.

"The first tomatoes will be tasted by the trained panel of 19 part-time research centre employees.

"They have been recruited and screened and chosen based on their ability to be able to discriminate, describe and differentiate different products," Bowen said.

Tomatoes will then be tasted by the consumer panel, which will consist of 225 random people.

Also under scrutiny will be the hardness, yield and pest resistance of the new varieties.

The program is in the early stages of Year 2 of its five-year funding agreement with the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada and the research centre.

Liscombe and Bowen said the program may yield as many as 10 new hybrid tomatoes.

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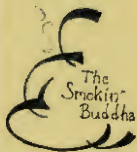
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How can we **help** you?

Finding the word on the streets

Q: There's a new "511 travel info" sign with a swoosh on the 406 in St. Catharines. Why?

A: The blue sign between Westchester Creek, and Glendale Ave. is advertising the province's 511 road information phone

number and website.

The service allows travellers on Ontario highways to call 511 or go to www.ontario.ca/511 to receive the latest information about road conditions, such as closures, construction slow downs and winter conditions.

The service has been in existence since 2009, but Ministry of Transportation spokeswoman Astrid Poel said in an email that the ministry is currently working on an education campaign to increase public awareness. That campaign includes road signs.

Poel said information is updated at least five times a day or as conditions change.

The website provides additional information on traffic flow, ferry services, carpool lanes, high occupancy vehicle lanes and the location of service centres, provincial parks and travel information centres. It also has a map of traffic cameras that can be clicked on to get a birds-eye view.

Pen Centre. Nick Rosati, supervisor of traffic systems for the Region, said there aren't too many situations in Niagara in which a turn lane becomes its own lane. Most of the time, drivers making a right have to wait for a break in traffic. Drivers unfamiliar with the Merritt and Glendale area are likely to yield as a result.

"I do see it happen all the time," Rosati said. "Most other situations, that right-turn channel doesn't have it's own receiving lane on the other side."

"It's not a free-flow condition."

Q: Old Oxford St., in the north end, has "No Parking" signs down both sides of the street, all the way down. Why?

A: The "no parking" signs were installed on Old Oxford Rd. in St. Catharines by the intersections of Furnmire Place and Richelleu Dr. about 10 years ago.

St. Catharines' manager of transportation services Chris Day said the city took the step due to concerns raised by residents. In particular, they were worried the visibility at intersections was obscured by vehicles parking so close to them.

Q: I have read somewhere that a soldier served in the War of 1812 named Wilingier. Since Wilingier

St. in Niagara Falls is near Riall St. and Dorchester Rd., which were both named after people dealing with the War of 1812, I was hoping you could discover information on the namesake of Wilingier St. It is also interesting that the street sign at one end of the street is spelled Wilingier and at the other end it is spelled Wilinger.

A: We contacted Niagara Falls historian Sherman Zavitz and City Hall assistant planner Peggy Boyle, who both scoured their records for Wilingers and came up empty handed.

Boyle said the subdivision plan for the area was dated October 1952 and began with a single lot called Wilinger St. The street was then extended sometime during the 1960s to 1970s.

She said since street names are usually chosen by the developer, it may be this particular developer had a reason for choosing the name.

That was certainly the case with Cindie Dr. and Cherie Rd. in St. Catharines, which Search Engine previously reported were named after the daughters of their north-end subdivision developer.

So alert readers, we turn this question over to you. Do you know where the name Wilingier/Wilinger St. came from?



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Shingles is caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox (varicella-zoster virus). After the chickenpox blisters heal, the virus remains dormant in nerve cells in your body. It can become reactivated after many years resulting in shingles. It is not known exactly why the virus becomes reactivated, however it is thought that having a weakened immune system along with physical trauma, UV light or stress may play a role. The risk of developing shingles increases with age and people over 50 years old are at the greatest risk. The symptoms include a painful, blistering rash that often breaks out in one part of the body, usually the chest or upper back are involved. Sometimes the pain resulting from shingles can last for weeks, months, or nearly years, after the rash heals. This lasting pain has been described as burning, aching, throbbing or stabbing and can result from something as little as a breeze or the touch of clothing on the skin. Older people are again at greater risk. Shingles may also result in skin infections at the site of the rash or scarring following healing of the rash.

Fortunately, a vaccine is now available to boost your immune system and help to prevent shingles and its complications. It is called Zostavax and is available to adults over 50 years old. The vaccine cannot be used if you are already experiencing symptoms of shingles; it is only used for prevention. The vaccine is given as a single dose by injection just under the skin of the upper arm by a doctor or trained nurse. As all medicines and vaccines can have side effects, some people may experience redness, pain, swelling, or bruising at the site of injection or headaches. These are the most common unwanted effects, but they are usually minor. This vaccine was found to reduce the risk of developing shingles by about 50-70% (depending on your age) within the first year after receiving the vaccine. Zostavax must be stored frozen between -15 degrees Celsius until the day it is to be used. Only a few pharmacies currently have the correct storage facilities for this vaccine to be able to stock it. Zostavax is available from all of the Boggio Family of Pharmacy locations.

Zostavax is safe for most people, however it should not be used by anyone who:

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- TAKES HIGH DOSES OF STEROIDS (E.G., PREDNISONE, METHYLPREDNISOLONE) BY INJECTION OR BY MOUTH

Since this is a relatively new vaccine, it is not known if it will provide protection from shingles for longer than 4 years.

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist for more information and advice about shingles and to find out if the Zostavax vaccine is right for you.

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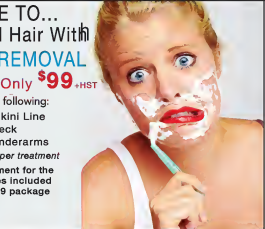
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SPORTS

■ **FLATWATER SPORTS:** Indoor facility mimic paddling, rowing

End to training

ALLAN BENNER
QMI Agency Niagara

Flatwater sports organizations hope the new nearly 5,000,000 multi-sport indoor training flume will help them achieve one common goal — Olympic gold.

The new training facility was unveiled Wednesday at the Welland International Flatwater Centre, allowing athletes to hone their skills year-round.

Now that local flatwater athletes will no longer have to wait for the ice on the recreational waterway to thaw before they can resume their training, there's no stopping them, Welland Recreational Canal Corp. executive director Stephen Fischer.

Regardless of the sport, he said top international athletes usually come from communities where they can spend most of the year in training.

The Edmonton Curling Club, for instance, is open 10 months of the year, "and if you ever wonder why so many Olympic curlers and world champions come from that facility, it's about having year-round access," Fischer said.

"Once you expand the amount of programming and increase the number of people that are participating, you have a greater chance of finding that next Olympic athlete right here within Niagara, for certain. Being able to train on the water to practice technique in a controlled environment allows for a greater development of athletes, there's no question about that."

Does that mean the next Olympic gold medalist could come from Welland?

"Let's hope," Fischer replied. "I love it. Isn't that the goal?"

It's a goal shared by flatwater sports enthusiasts across the province, said Row Ontario executive director Derek Ventrone.

"With these types of facilities to enable us to do a much higher level of training year-round, there will be a greater number of athletes that will perform on a higher level on the international stage," Ventrone said. "It's no longer about what you can do at your national championships, it's producing athletes that will now perform at the international level. This facility will have an impact on Ontario athletes that are on this path."

"The tank is an incredible advantage over other tanks in the area, province, nation and even around the globe," Fischer said.

Although there are other rowing tanks within Niagara, such as one at Brock University, Fischer said they don't compare to the new facility.

The flume's two tanks are each

equipped with 240-horsepower variable speed pumps that simulate the speed of boats through the water.

By controlling the speed of the water, Fischer said the flume can replicate ideal conditions for athletes regardless of their experience level.

"If you have a novice, you can have it running at a rate that a novice would be very comfortable with. But you can also upgrade it, if you have a high-performance dragon boat in there," he said.

The facility, large enough to accommodate as many as 40 dragon boats at a time, is also equipped with a winch system that lowers different kinds of boat simulators — called troughs — into the tanks, allowing athletes to train for different flatwater sports including rowing, canoeing, kayaking and dragon boating.

And when the flume is not in use, a solid floor can be added over it allowing the building to be used for other purposes.

On Tuesday athletes from the Notre Dame Rowing Club had an opportunity to use the flume for the first time. Club president Dave Palette was impressed.

He said the facility "mimics the experience on the water far better" than other facilities he's visited.

"There's nothing like this," Palette said. "In terms of rowing, it really mimics what you get when you're on the water except for the wind."

South Niagara Rowing Club head coach Ron (Swede) Burak has high hopes for the facility, too.

"Hopefully, it's going to help expose the sport even more, so that we can get more kids involved," he said.

"My hope as head coach is to help these athletes realize their Olympic dream. As a former Olympian, this is something I'd like to promote," added Burak, who competed in the 1976 Summer Olympics in Montreal.

CanoeKayak Canada's high performance director Scott Logan shared the excitement about the training facility.

"The paddling tank will be a significant asset for technique training and conditioning of paddlers, particularly in the off-season," Logan said. "Investing in sports infrastructure, as we've seen with the new Welland International Flatwater Centre, creates recreational and competitive opportunities to improve health and wellness, foster community building, and provide activities for local youth."

Despite the competition the new facility poses for Brock's training tank, the head coach of university's rowing team, Peter Scorswell, said he's pleased to see the new facility in Niagara.

"It just keeps on building on sport infrastructure in general in the peninsula, and this is one area where the peninsula can keep pushing forward to be become a hub for a variety of sports."

The tank will officially open in October, a year later than initially planned.

Fischer said the delay was the result of strikes among construction trades since work on the facility began. It was also thoroughly tested to make certain everything was working properly, and nothing leaked.

"It's sad to miss the season," he said. "It's absolutely a bump, but we'll be ready for launch come the fall."

allan.benner@sunmedia.ca
Twitter: @abenner1



ALLAN BENNER/QMI AGENCY NIAGARA

Notre Dame Rowing Club members, from left, Lauren Pledt, Ryan Power, Nicole Power and Nikki Johnstone demonstrate the new indoor flatwater training flume at the Welland International Flatwater Centre, during an event held Wednesday to unveil the facility.

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SPORTS

■ **HOCKEY:** 10-year minor coaching veteran Wes Wolfe succeeding Yvan Charrois as Pirates head coach

New hands on deck

BERND FRANKE
QMI Agency

For the new coaches of the Port Colborne Pirates, games in the Greater Ontario Junior Hockey League next season will be won and lost in practice.

The final score will only tell head coach

Wes Wolfe and defensive assistant Nick Denhaan by how much.

How the Pirates fare on the scoreboard and in the standings once the whistle blows will also tell the first-year Junior B coach what the young team will need to do better to prepare for its next opponent.

Preparation and hard work will be the top priorities when Port Colborne returns to the ice in September hoping to improve on a disappointing, eighth-place finish in the nine-team Golden Horseshoe Conference and forget all about ending 2013-14 with 19 straight losses.

"Hard work is going to get us where we want to be," said the 24-year-old Wolfe, who already

has 10 years coaching experience under his belt despite his youth.

Denhaan said he learned all about the importance of preparation during four seasons working with Brock University head coach Murray Nystrom as the Badgers equipment manager.

"Nobody was better at preparing a team to play than Murray," said Denhaan, a Brock sport man-

agement graduate now working as a sales consultant with Harrow Sports.

The Pirates have three goals heading into the new season. Port Colborne wants to continue to improve, become known as a development centre and, ultimately, put a winning team on the ice.

See PIRATES on Page 31

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BERND FRANKE/STAFF PHOTO

Assistant coach Nick Denhaan, left, will run the defence and head coach Wes Wolfe the bench for the Greater Ontario Junior Hockey League's Port Colborne Pirates next season.

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SPORTS

PIRATES

Port welcomes new coaches

From Page 30

"On-ice success can't happen unless we do the first two," he said.

Wolfe, who spent five years playing junior C with the Chippewa Riverhawks, all while coaching minor hockey in his native Niagara Falls, intends to lead by example.

"We can't promise how many games we will win, but what we will guarantee is that we'll be the first guys at the arena and the last guys to go home."

Wolfe and Denhaan, 25, his top assistant with the triple A major midget Niagara Falls Riverhawks last season, won't exactly be rookies on the Bucs bench when hockey resumes in September. They spent the final six weeks of last season with the Pirates in a "support role" and eight games running the team in head coach Ivan Charroir's absence.

Wolfe is confident experience combined with his coaching resume will silence detractors who question whether he's too young to coach at the junior B level.

"Most guys don't get into coaching until they're my age. I've already been doing this for 10 years. I'm grateful for the opportunity, but I'm confident of what I can bring to the table," said Wolfe, who works as a video analyst for Stathletes in

St. Catharines.

Wolfe and Denhaan impressed team owner Tim Toffolo and Charroir, the team's general manager, with their knowledge and "commitment to the game."

"It's a really good fit for us," he said.

Toffolo isn't worried that Wolfe is too young to take over a team on which players can be as old as 20.

"Both Wes and Nick are mature beyond their years. They know their hockey, and they're very committed to the game."

About 10 players are eligible to return from a team that plunged to eighth from second due to a combination of injuries and the decision to jettison veterans in favour of rebuilding at the trade deadline.

Wolfe said he wants to keep the team's immediate past in the past.

"We want to forget that last season ever happened and start fresh. You can't move forward by continuing to look back."

By the same token, enduring "so many bad things across the spectrum" can be a silver lining if it can motivate the franchise to move forward.

"Adversity is just an opportunity that's disguised," Wolfe said.

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■ AUTO RACING



BEHO FRANK/
STAFF PHOTO
Inspector Mark Chapman checks the tires and suspension to make sure a race car meets specifications in the 358 modified class a test and tune session Saturday at Merrittville Speedway.

Drivers tune up for racing

BEHO FRANK
QM Agency Niagara

Merrittville Speedway hosted auto racing's version of spring training April 19 and Mother Nature, as anxious to finally emerge from the shadow of Old Man Winter as the drivers were to start the 2014 season, couldn't have been more co-operative.

Bright sunshine took much of the bite out of cool temperatures that, thankfully, were more suited for hoodies than parkas, and more wet precipitation there was came from a watering truck that prepared the track for practice laps in five racing divisions.

Upwards of 40 drivers who attended a test and tune session Saturday at the Thorold track could have done without the wind, but two out of three ain't bad after a winter that felt like it would never go away.

The one-day warmup to next weekend's Spring Sizzler season opener started with drivers taking turns having their cars inspected. Track officials looked under the hood and crawled under the tires to ensure the customized vehicles met the specifications in the various racing classes at Merrittville, a popular stop on a weekend circuit that starts Fridays at Oshweken and western New York before wrapping up Sunday at New Humberstone Speedway in Port Colborne.

Drivers also had the opportunity to have their vehicles weighed at the test and tune. Each racing class has a minimum weight and top five finishers on race nights risk disqualification if they run too light.

"I'm really skinny, so I have to carry a lot of weight," quipped Adam Leslie, 24, a Port Colborne driver who has 100 pounds of lead strategically bolted to the chassis of his sportsman car in order to keep it aerodynamic while meeting the minimum standard.

A general mechanic heading into his fifth sportsman season and sixth overall at Merrittville, Leslie used the tune portion of the test and tune to "set up" his

car. He said adjusting the tension on the front and rear suspensions allows him to lift and lower each end of the car.

"You do what works best for the track," said Leslie, who also races regularly at New Humberstone, his hometown track.

Drivers in the sportsman division can also adjust the pressure in each tire depending on how the track "feels" in warmups, he said.

Aaron Willey of Wellandport, who competes in the four-cylinder mini stocks class, had two cars inspected at the test and tune — his wife Jocelyn's and one that will be driven by his 14-year-old son Kurtis.

Willey hoped that wind wouldn't be a factor in his son's introduction to Merrittville's outside track.

"Nothing dries out a track faster than wind. If you want to get a true feel for a track, it has to be calm," said Aaron, a veteran driver who calls "reading the track" the most important part of a race plan.

He said the key to winning at Merrittville, for instance, is cornering into the long straightaway at the D-shaped, dirt track.

"You get the hang of the No. 4 corner here and your season is made," Willey said.

Kurtis Willey is a Merrittville rookie in 2014, though only when it comes to competing on the larger of the speedway's two tracks. Before racing sportsman last season at New Humberstone, he spent five years racing go karts on Merrittville's inside track.

Kurtis, a Grade 9 student at Beamsville District Secondary School, said the transition to mini stocks from go karts took him five to six weeks.

"The first thing you realize is the difference in the size. It's a lot more car to turn around," he said.

Kurtis had a fifth-place and was in the running for two thirds before being knocked out of contention in his 24-race rookie season in the sportsman class.

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■ \$10 MILLION

Province wheels out bike-friendly program

Inport News Staff

The province announced Monday it plans to invest \$10 million over three years to help municipalities improve cycling infrastructure.

And that has Port Colborne

Mayor Vance Badawey wanting to learn more.

"Every program that the province puts out piques my interest," he quipped.

Few details were available about how Ontario's program would be delivered as part of

its first Cycling Action Plan.

A news release did say the province will also dedicate \$15 million over three years to build cycling infrastructure on provincial highways and bridges, such as paved road shoulders, all part of

#CycleON, a 20-year vision for cycling in Ontario.

Money for municipalities could be used to develop new routes, improve lane markings or signage.

See CYCLING on Page 36



FILE PHOTO

Pelham has designated a bicycle route along Haist St. with painted guides, as shown in this file photo.

SPOTLIGHT on service

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■ CYCLING

More good news could come for cyclists

From Page 35

Badwey said his city remains committed to expanding its trails network and providing new bike lanes and venues.

While at one time his municipality focused on development of the Vale Health and Wellness Centre and its services, Badwey said Port Colborne is now looking to enhance its outdoor programming.

As plans continue to evolve for the former industrial lands on the east side of the canal, he suggested cycling amenities would feature prominently.

"It makes sense that if you can get a hold of some of those (provincial) dollars, we can enhance Port Colborne as a destination," he said.

The province's cycling vision is aimed at supporting healthier and more active lifestyles, increased tourism opportunities, a greener environment and more sustainable transit, the news release said.

Since 2010, Ontario has added 112 kilometres of paved shoulders along provincial highways.

It was unclear how the new funding will be made available to municipalities.

On a related matter, the Share the Road Cycling Coalition has handed the City of St. Catharines a bronze award as a cycling-friendly city. The Bicycle Friendly Communities Program provides incentives, hands-on assistance, and award recognition for communities that actively support bicycling.

Communities are judged on categories that include engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement and evaluation and planning.

Last year Pelham received a silver designation, the first at that level for a municipality of its size.

Welland in 2012 was Niagara's first municipality to be recognized as bicycle-friendly, receiving a bronze award.

— with files from QMI Agency Niagara

■ BIKES

Stricter bike safety rules coming

InPort News Staff

There could be more good news coming to cyclists from the province.

Legislation introduced last month, and awaiting second reading, proposes to raise fines for drivers who hit cyclists with their vehicle doors to a range of \$300 to \$1,000 — up from \$60 to \$500 — and increase demerit points to three from two.

Bill 173, if it survives a third and final reading, also would require drivers to maintain a distance of one metre when passing cyclists.

But it would also increase the maximum fine from \$20 to a set fine amount in the \$60 to \$500 range for not using required bicycle lights and other reflectors. It would now permit the use of flashing red lights as a safety feature on bicycles.



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TRIBOROUGH DATEBOOK

APRIL 24

CLASSIC BOOK CLUB

at Wainfleet Township Public Library, 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. Join us for afternoon tea. This month's selection is *Invahoe*, by Sir William Scott. Call 905-699-1277 to register as a book club member.

FIRST AID/CPR/AED

training, and on April 25, at Employment Solutions, 3 East Main St., Welland, 9 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Call 905-788-3751 or e-mail reception@employment-solutions.org to reserve a spot.

ROYAL HIGH TEA

You will be treated to homemade scones with fresh raspberry preserves, a bottomless cup of tea and other "royal treats" at Haldimand County Museum & Archives, at 1 p.m. Rounding out the afternoon will be a special talk on Edwardian times above and below stairs. Cost \$10, registration required. For info contact 905-732-5880 or register online through Haldimand County's Leisure Link, program code 27786.

APRIL 25

WELLAND MUSEUM TRIVIA

Night is at Welland Community Wellness Complex. Doors open at 7 p.m., game begins at 7:30 p.m., \$20 a person. Tickets can be reserved by calling the museum at 905-732-2215. Pizza, door prizes and fun.

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ROAST BEEF DINNER

at Knox Church, 355 Fitch St., Welland. Sittings at 5 p.m., and 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$14 available by calling 905-735-3050.

SPAGHETTI SUPPER

at FortHill United Church at 5:30 p.m. (one sitting only). Adults \$10, children to age 12 \$5. Family maximum \$30. UCW bake sale in the narthex. Phone 892-6443 Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday mornings to reserve tickets.

SUPPRESSA NIGHT

at Casa Dante, 34 Lincoln St. W. Cost per person is \$20. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. Menu: pasta and meatballs, chicken and potatoes, salad, rolls and butter, cake, coffee and tea. For information and tickets, call Angelo at 905-734-3914 or Vito at 905-735-5883.

APRIL 25-27

PELHAM HOME SHOW

presented by FortHill and District Kinsmen at Pelham Arena. Exhibitor applications at www.forthillkingsmen.ca. For information contact 905-346-8288 or forthillkingsmen@hotmail.com.

APRIL 26

RCAF

Royal Canadian Air Force Association 434-484 Myrnes

holds its annual joint meeting at Royal Canadian Legion Branch 613, Hwy. 20, FortHill, at 2 p.m. Guest speaker is Sam Newman, former captain with United Nations Peace Keeping Force, he is also past-president of the Air Force Association Ontario Group. All welcome. Refreshments provided. This topic will be of interest to any former UK personnel and all veterans.

TRIVIA NIGHT

at First Evangelical Lutheran Church, 688 Elm St., Port Colborne. Get a team together, or come on your own and join a team, and enjoy an evening of fun, fellowship, food, prizes and trivia. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Questions start at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$15 a person. To reserve a table for your team and reserve your tickets call 905-835-8111 or e-mail firstlutheranpc@gmail.com.

PROGRESSIVE EUCHRE

hosted by FortHill Lioness at FortHill Lions Hall, Hwy 20, at 7 p.m. Cost \$5 a person. Prizes light food, cash bar.

RESPECT TO LIFE

In regards to "Respect to Life," The Daughters of Isabelle will have a baby shower on April 26 and 27 at the doors of Sacred Heart Church on Empire St. after each mass on Saturday at 4:30 p.m. and Sunday at 11:45 a.m. A small contribution either of clothing or money will be well appreciated. We support mothers in need.

APRIL 27

CHAPPEL SINGERS

present Sweet Sounds of Spring, 2 p.m., at Wesley United Church, 244 First Ave., Welland. Tickets are \$10 at the door or call 905-735-5912.

PENNY AND BAKE SALE

hosted by St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Women's League at St. Andrew the Apostle Church Hall, East Main St. and St. Andrew Ave., Welland, noon to 2 p.m. Draws begin at 1:30 p.m. Free admission.

APRIL 28

CLOTHING SALE

at Pelham Public Library. All sizes and styles. Retro, accessories, bedding, curtains and more. Starts at 10 a.m. and ends Saturday, May 3, at 5 p.m. On the final day fill a garbage bag for \$5.

CONTAINER GARDEN

workshop with Karin Vermeer at Welland Public Library. Bring your own 10-inch pot. This program costs \$10 a person (includes soil and plants). Register in advance.

EVENING BOOK CLUB

at Wainfleet Township Public Library, 6:30 p.m. This month's selection is *For One More Day*, by Mitch Albom. Call 905-899-1277 to register as a book club member.

APRIL 29

FUNG LOY KOK TAOIST TAI CHI

holds an open house 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. You are more than welcome to join a class at any time. Call 905-935-7583 or visit taoist.org/niagara for more information.

TAKEOUT PASTA DINNER

for St. Vincent de Paul Society, at St. Kevin's church Northcote Ave. entrance, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Cost is \$10 for four meatballs, pasta, salad and a bun. Meatballs and sauce also available.

APRIL 30

PAINTING WITH MARGARET

at Port Colborne Public Library, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Create a summer-time decorative plaque. Cost is \$10. Pre-register at the library.

COMPUTER WORKSHOP

on Zinio Magazine and Freegal Music, at Welland Public Library, at 2 p.m. Want to read and download current magazines and popular music? This information session will show you how to use services available through the library website. Register in advance as space is limited. For more information call 905-734-6210 ext. 2521.

FILM BUFS

discussion group at Port Colborne Public Library, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Members view films at home and discuss them in a group setting. Free. Call 905-834-6512 for program details.

HOPE GROUP

(support group for parents with ADHD children), meets 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the St. Catharines Regional Child Care Centre, 179 Carlton St. Topic: understanding medications and alternative treatments, with a guest pharmacist. Contact Learning Disabilities Association at 905-641-1021.

MAY 2

DESSERT FASHION SHOW

The First Presbyterian Church Women in Port Colborne are hosting a dessert fashion show by ALIA in TanJian from the Lundy's Lane Outlet Mall in Niagara Falls at 7 p.m. Admission \$7. Refreshments and door prizes. Call 905-834-7377 for tickets.

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